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DANIEL BRERETON
THE NOCTURNALS™
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THE NOCTURNALS™

Black Planet™

PART SIX

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BSG

DOWNTOWN. 2A.M.
"IT'S BEEN TWENTY MINUTES.
"CAN'T YOU JUST LEAVE IT?"
YOU'RE SPOILING THE MOOD, BANDIT.
JUST A SEC, DOLL...
ARE ALL RACCOONS THIS CHARMING ON THE FIRST DATE?
ONLY THIS ONE.
MAYBE WE SHOULD DO THIS ANOTHER NIGHT...
NO, HEY, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE... gnnh...
...ALMOST GOT IT...
C'MON, YOU LITTLE BUGGER.

MISTER, YOU'VE GOT EXACTLY TEN SECONDS TO GET YOUR HAND OUT OF THAT GARBAGE DISPOSAL...
LICA, BABY, GIMME A BREAK... I GOT A... RNG... MAJOR SECURITY BREACH HERE.
I WANT YOU SHOULD FEEL SAFE WITH ME, Y'KNOW?
AHA!
OH, YES.
NOW I HAVE YOU, MY LITTLE FRIEND.
DING-DONG!
HEY, DOLL, WE GOT COMPANY! YOU WANNA GET THAT?

hmm. A LAB MOUSE.
WHAT CAGE DID YOU ESCAPE FROM?
DING-DONG!
BABY GET THE DOOR!
DING-DONG!
NOK NOK NOK!
DING-DONG! DING-DONG! DING-DONG!
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS...?
DING-DONG! DING-DONG! DING-DONG!
OH, I'M COMIN', WISEGUY.

KA-BRAMM!
SON OF A BITCH!
DID WE GET 'IM?
I CAN'T TELL.
YOU BOYS JUST GOT ON MY VERY LAST NERVE.

BRRUP-BRRUP!
BRRKT-BRRKT!
TAKE 'IM--
UGHK!
SKRAKT!
KICK!
BLAM! BLAM!
HAVE A SEAT.
BRRRKT!
BRRUP-BRRUP!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

ACK--
KPOW!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
SPAK!
CLIK CLIK CLIK
SHIT.
BEEEEEEP!
BIP
BIP

'EVENING, GENTLEMEN.
BAM! BAM!
DON'T GET UP.
uhhgrk...!
C'MON IN, DOC...
...DON'T MIND THE MESS...
KRACK!
WHAT WE GOT HERE...?
ARE WE COPS OR ROBBERS?

OH, CRAP...
SAY IT AIN'T SO...
I'M AFRAID IT ISS, BANDIT.
FANE MADE ME A BETTER OFFER.
FREEDOM... AND CONTROL OF YOUR OUTFIT. ALL I NEED DO TO GET IT WAS BRING THEM YOUR HIDE.
SSOUNDED OKAY TO ME. FRIENDSHIP ISN'T BIG IN MY SPECIES. SURVIVAL ISS.
GUESS THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR JUNGLING-UP WITH A FREAKIN' SNAKE.
IT'S YOUR WEAK, WARM BLOOD. IMPEDES YOUR JUDGMENT.
RAT BREATH, I'M GONNA SHOW YOU COLD-BLOODED...
SHRKSHH!

THAT'S ENOUGH CLEAN-HANDS
YOU MIND? I'M BUSY
=blecch=
THE COPS ARE ON THEIR WAY, AND I'VE GOT SOMETHING BETTER FOR YOU THAN SNAKE-MEAT
WHAT'S WRONG BABY? YOUR COLOR'S GONE ALL FUNNY
BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW I LIKE FROGS, TOO
DROP DEAD
ARE YOU TWO FINISHED? THIS ISN'T A SOCIAL CALL.

TWO MINUTES LATER
I EXPECT THEY'LL HAVE TAKEN EVE AND KOMODO INTO THE MONSTER SHOP
WE'VE NEVER GOTTEN THAT FAR INTO THEIR BASEMENT
THEY'LL BE EXPECTING US AND WE'LL NEED A GUIDE
I'M DEFINITELY UP FOR GETTING MY PAWS ON [redacted]TIME
'COURSE, MY TIME IS VALUABLE, AND YOUR LITTLE GIRL MAY NOT HAVE MUCH LEFT... BRING ANY MONEY?
OH, FORGET THIS LOSER, DOC
I HEAR SIRENS--LET'S GO.
WELL GOOD NIGHT BANDIT GIVE OUR REGARDS TO THE COPS
Ah, HELL.
I'LL GRAB MY COAT
WE'LL WAIT

SOMEWHERE
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? KOMODO'S IN TROUBLE!
DAD'S GONNA KILL ME
BAD, BAD LITTLE TOYS!
I'M AFRAID YOUR PLAYTHINGS ARE HELPLESS HERE
NOT FOR LONG, SQUID BOY

WHAT KIND OF TRICK IS THIS?
THE RAZORBLADE IN THE APPLE KIND, I'M AFRAID
DADDY?!
SURE, DOC. ALONG W TH MY NEW FRIEND
THAT'S FANE? YIKES!
WHERE'S HIS PITCHFORK?
HANG IN THERE HALLOWEEN GIRL-- TH S'LL ALL BE OVER SOON
YOU HERE, STAR?

I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE MY LUCK. ALL THE NIGHTCRAWLERS IN ONE BUCKET
THIS MAKES MY JOB SO MUCH EASIER
MY CHILDREN ARE VERY HUNGRY DOCTOR
AND TONIGHT THEY WILL FEAST THEMSELVES ON YOURS

THAT OVERRIPE TOMATO IN THE RED DRESS IS ZAMPA'S SECRETARY, LICA
THE BROAD I ALMOST SCORED WITH TONIGHT! HOLY COW.
I MAY BE ILL
SORRY LOVER SOMETHING JUST CAME UP
REALLY?
LET'S TEST THAT THEORY
KBLOW!

..JUST A LITTLE MOD-FICATION ON THE PASSAGE I'VE BEEN CHLOISHLY PREOCCUPIED WITH.
DADDY!
WHAT D' POC DO TO THESE ROUNDS? WE'RE BLOW'N 'EM AWAY TO HELL!
CLOSE, SNAKECHARMER .. CLOSE

HOLD THE FORT PEOPLE, I'M GOING AFTER FANE
FWROOSH!
LET ME GO, UGLY MAN!
TELL ME OF THE PASSAGE DEVICE AND I MAY ALLOW YOU AND YOUR FATHER TO LIVE
ARE YOU KIDDING? MY DAD'S GONNA KNOCK YOUR BLOCK OFF!

LET HER GO NOW!
ONE STEP CLOSER HORROR AND I SNAP HER NECK BACK!
BLAM!
SAY GOODNIGHT, DEMON
STEADY FRUITBAT YOU'RE OKAY
DADDY, I WASN'T SCARED, I WASN'T!

A CLEVER PAINFUL TRICK YOUR MAGIC BULLETS
I GATHER A YOU'VE JUST BLOWN SEVERAL PIECES OF ME BACK TO OUR BLACK PLANET?
CLEVER INDEED
EVE, GET OUT OF HERE!
THERE'S ENOUGH OF ME LEFT TO EAT YOU ALL
SOME DAYS YOU GET THE BEAR

RECOVERED HORROR
AND IT WILL BE AS FULL OF CRAP AS YOU
HEY!
KOMODO?!?
EASY, HALLOWEEN GIRL.
NOBODY HERE BUT US MONSTERS

LOOK!
FANE!
KOMODO! YOUR HYBRID FRIENDS ARE FREE!
STEP AWAY, DOC.

RRIIIIPP!
I CAN HANDLE THIS.
T'S NOT A REQUEST
BACK OFF OR YOU RE GONNA GET BIT
I THINK I SEE YOUR POINT.
YOU CURSED KEEP AWAY FROM ME!

LATER
OH, MY POOR MUSCLES.
NOW THAT'S A FIRE I CAN TOLERATE, FEGTLS.
YEAH, WELL THE SMELL ISN'T VERY NICE
EVERY-BODY GOT THEIR FINGERS AND TOES?

ALIVE AND KICKING DOC!
I DON'T KNOW, EVE.
WE GOT 'EM ALL, DIDN'T WE, DAD?
AT LEAST WE KNOW IF THEY RESURFACE WE'LL BE READY FOR THEM
I DON'T MIND SAYING, DOC..
..THIS KIND OF WORK AIN'T GONNA EXACTLY DETER ME FROM A LIFE OF CRIME
THAT'S TOO BAD.. AND A WASTE OF YOUR OBVIOUS TALENTS

I WAS CONSIDERING RECRUITING THE HYBRIDS WE UNSHACKLED...
...BUT I MIGHT FEEL BETTER ABOUT THROWING IN WITH YOU IF IT MEANT GETTING CLOSER TO HOT LIPS HERE
KRAK!
OW.
WELL, I FEEL BETTER

'TIS FIFTEEN MINUTES TILL SUN-UP, YOU VANDALS
..ARE YOU ABOUT FINISHED TRASHING THE PLACE?
FINISHED FOR TONIGHT, ANYWAY
YOU MISSED A HELLACIOUS FIGHT, POLYCHROME WE COULD HAVE USED YOU.
YOU KNOW IT, GIRL
..BUT I PREFER THESE MORE PEACEFUL MOMENTS
ME TOO.
CAN WE GO HOME NOW?
The End

THANK YOU
THANK YOU
THANK YOU

To my little girls Lindsay Alexis and Audrey Catherine, for their inspiration, love and energy; My wife Melissa, for the NARN K and many hours of typing, reading pages of script and input on work in-progress; Brett Rector, tireless action-hero model and best friend; My brother Matthew and my father George Brereton, my two fearless 'cops'; Charmaine Conui and John Estes for their friendship and more action-hero/bad-guy inspiration; Michele, Little Hunter and mom, Colin , Casey Jane, Levi, Harris, Howard, Ray, Casey, Andrea, Mojo, Joe, Alan, Sam and the Zampa Family.

TWO SPECIAL THANK YOUS

To superbadass Cop and true-crime writer Lucio Perez, and hardboiled New York Lawman screenwriter Ken Sanzel for technical assistance and moral support.

SHOTS IN THE DARK

I want to sincerely thank each of you out there who picked up The Nocturnals *in the last seven months. Thanks for taking a chance on a first-time comics writer. Thanks for supporting the idea of creator ownership in comics, and thanks for writing in. I really wish I could print each and every letter* The Nocturnals *received, but despite the fact that this is a creator-owned book, I must yield space to the nice company that published this wacky comic in the first place, so we only have a couple pages to work with. I encourage any and all of you to scribble me a few lines and let me know what you thought of* The Nocturnals, *what you liked about it, what you hated about it, who your favorites were and all that...I want to know more about you, the readers of this here book I slaved over for two plus years, just as I hope you got to know the Nocturnals themselves in this series.*

Dear Kara,

When a new comic debuts, I usually wait until I've read the first several issues before I consider penning a letter. I do this because once or twice in the past I've written a complimentary letter based on a first issue only to find that subsequent issues fail to measure up. Very embarrassing for me when one or two of those letters get printed.

I'm going to make an exception for *The Nocturnals*. Unlike so many adventure comics, *The Nocturnals* actually has an original tale to tell, and that prospect has me excited.

Still, it takes more than a good concept to launch a story — it takes a great deal of knowledge in the field of storytelling. And this is where Daniel Brereton has really surprised me. For a first-time (to the best of my knowledge) writer, Daniel truly distinguishes himself with a strong grasp of plotting, pacing, scripting and characterization. What's more, his writing displays a confidence and understanding of the history of the adventure genre and its ties to pulp fiction — a quality that many aspire to, but few attain.
Prior to *The Nocturnals*, I had not been a great fan of Daniel's art — his style is simply too dark and menacing for most super-hero comics. On the other hand, this style is perfectly at home in the pages of *The Nocturnals*.

Indeed, this would seem to be the work that he was born for. There's also a "cool factor" to his work that puts the superficial, glitzy Image take on cool to shame.

This is a lot to take on the first issue of a comic, but I really feel Daniel's got something here. As a creator-owned comic there's also a greater likelihood that the level of quality will remain high; this will be Daniel's baby all the way.

I look forward to writing again soon.

Sincerely,
David Farabeed
Austin, TX

I'm glad you made an exception with The Nocturnals, *David. Hope I didn't embarrass you with this one.*

Dear Dan
RE: Nocturnals #3

So, the little Beasties are the Crim. They're some nasty little critters. Jeez, this book gets better and better! It's spooky, kooky and exciting all under one cover. So, the Nocturnals run into the Raccoon in the cemetery; does the conversation between Firelion and Raccoon indicate a past relationship? (I've figured out what the passage is now, so I don't need to know what it is). Are we ever gonna witness the invasion of Horror's world by the Crim? Why did the lettering in the word bubbles change when Doc was talking to Gunwitch? That was awesome, the way you made the flashback scene look all weird, do it again! More Gunwitch! Nocturnals Trade Paperback! Nocturnals action figures! Nocturnals ongoing series! This is perfection Dan, keep it up and keep it continuing! You deserve awards! I thought 'Breed was good; Nocturnals stomped it! I wanna see the Doc do a tap dance on Fane's face! I can't wait to see what's behind the scarf. Oh, yeah, does Mojo belong to Gunwitch, or does he just follow him around because he likes the way he smells? Are we ever going to meet more NarnK escapees, like Komodo? (Can he breathe fire?). Eagerly awaiting issue #4.

Yours Cruelly
Phil Ludovico
Neshanic Station, NJ

Cruel Phil, Your letters never ceased to crack me up, so I don't mind revealing a secret or two. Here's the skinny on Doc's commands to the Gunwitch:

The Gunwitch, part zombie, part patchwork robot, is a homunculus; a creature made by a little alchemy, a little science and a little sorcery. The Gunwitch follows orders from two people, Evening and Doc, and will only respond to commands that are spoken in Horror's own tongue and dialect.

I'm not sure if Komodo can breathe fire or not. I have a feeling he may be able to, but it's not real pleasant for him and maybe a little painful. I suppose one of these days we'll find out for sure...

Dear Mr. Brereton,

I think you're one of the best painters in comics today. I have your *Spectre* cover, and I plan on purchasing the *World's Finest* trade. *The Nocturnals* looks like it's going to be great! Do you have any tips for a 15 year old aspiring comics artist? Thanks.

A fan,
John Skvasik II
Concord, OH

Thanks for the kind words, John. For all fifteen year-old aspiring artists, I have three things to impart:
• Do as well in school as you can. Don't make Art your only province of study.
• Draw constantly: 70% of drawing from Life, things around you; 20% superheroes, monsters and robots. Keep a sketchbook. All good artists do. The more you draw from life and the things in your world, the better comic book artist you'll be. Comic books are full of things that are not Doc Horror beating the hell out of monsters, although, admittedly, it's pretty damn fun to draw.
• Pick a path for yourself, and stick to it. I decided I wanted to be an illustrator when I was twelve years old and I kept with it. If you want a thing badly enough, and you're willing to work for it and love it, you can get there.

Dear Daniel,

I think that the writing and the art of *The Nocturnals* is really good. However, what I would really like to comment on is the little lesson in values you presented to the readers on top of page 8, #3. Learning to get past anger and other hurts is important in life, and

I think it was important and good that you cared enough to state that point in your story. My hat's off to you!

Sincerely,
Dan Thom

Thanks, Dan. I think it's important, too.

Dear Mr. Brereton,

It would be impossible, not to mention time consuming, for me to list everything I like about *The Nocturnals*, and considering you've probably already gotten enough fan mail to break even elderly but stoic Willie Lumpkin's back, I've decided to focus on one thing: your brilliantly garish painting style. It's gaudy, imperfect and powerful. Judging by the way you paint Doc Horror's hardware, not to mention the women who have more curves than a Missouri turnpike, you've obviously been influenced by the pulps of the '40s and '50s.

I hope that this mini-series isn't the last we'll see of the Horror and his crew. Keep up the great job!

Sincerely,
Paul E. Schultz
Laporte, IN

PS. Detectives Goodis and Willeford are nice touches too, but doesn't Willeford look a little like Don Pendleton in the Executioner days?

Taking into account that I fancy The Nocturnals as a sort of continuation of the Pulp Tradition, the term "garish" is a real compliment, Paul! And, no, you sure haven't seen the last of Horror and his crew, not by a long shot. Keep your ears to the ground. Detective Willeford may look a little like Don Pendleton, but to me he's just Dad.

Mr. Brereton,

I just received *Nocturnals* #2 and wanted to write in. The art is beautiful, and I find the story inventive and solid. I like a comic book which doesn't play down to its readers, and I definitely don't feel like I have to be 14 to enjoy it. My only gripe is that the lettering is quite a bit smaller than normal.

I would also like to say thank you. On the last day of last year's WonderCon in Oakland, I came up to you with my *Psycho* run to get signed. I hadn't had an opportunity to see you previously and you were gathering up your family to leave. In your position, I probably would have blown up at the lame fanboy who picked the worst possible to time to approach. But you took the time out for me, and I wanted to let you know how much it meant.

Thanks,
Matt Brown

I'm very happy to oblige anyone at a convention or store signing who wants a few books signed. It's not as much of a drag as you might think. The only people who make it a drag are the ones who only want signatures because they think for some reason it will increase the value of their comics, and could care less about the comic itself. They are usually rude folk and incur my ire quite easily. Grrr.

It's nice that you wrote to thank me for that, and makes me all the more glad I did oblige you. Anytime.

Dear Daniel Brereton,

It's a creepy cloudy damp 2:20 in the morning here in Burbank and I just finished reading *The Nocturnals #1*. Being a visual effects artist and a hopeful future comic penciller, I marvelled at the stunning artwork which graced your premiere issue. Even more amazing to myself is the amount of detail and the application of mood in every panel, not to mention that said panels were painted!

On top of all that muckitty muck, you wrote the thing! It flowed quite well and married well with the characters' appearances. There is also that detective story 1940s serial type of feeling I'm getting from it. Absolutely neat things you're doing with this book.

Previously, I only knew of your work from trading cards I'd seen which were quite tasty, but now I know that you're not just some pin-up artist. I'm quite happy with the layouts and the panel to panel progression, something I'm trying to master. I'd put it up against any issue of *Hellboy* or a Walt Simonson *Thor* issue. Heck, even *Marvels!*

Man, I hate to gush like a girly-man but dang, I love your artwork. That's enough

Nocturnal musing for awhile. Keep it up, may the force be with you, I'll swallow your soul, etc.

Sincerely
Rick "Why yes, I work on Power Rangers" Cortes

I'm glad you found The Nocturnals *palatable, Rick. You couldn't have nailed a better time to read this comic. Most of the pages in this series were painted on creepy, cloudy, damp nights. I don't think I could have painted any of this stuff during the daylight hours.*

Dear Mr. Danko,

Some quick thoughts on the first issue of *The Nocturnals*.

I have to admit, this one I was a bit leery of. Most of the new books that have come from Bravura since it started were ones that I knew I'd get my money's worth from, because I knew the creators involved were capable of writing and drawing good stories. I knew *'Breed* would be to my liking because I trust Jim Starlin; I knew I'd like *Power and Glory* because Howard Chaykin does good work; I supported *Dreadstar* for years from Epic and First Comics, so I had no doubts there; I liked the original *Star Slammers* book from Marvel, so that one was easy; and I know the writing talents of Marv Wolfman and Steven Grant, so deciding to stick with both *Man Called A*X* and *Edge* took no time at all.

With *The Nocturnals*, however, I had no such guarantees going in. I knew Dan Brereton was a terrific artist, because I've seen his work gracing such books as *Legends of the World's Finest* and *The Black Terror*... but I've never seen him write anything before. How do I know he's good at it?

Well, if this first issue is any indication, those fears were groundless. This is a richly textured and fascinating book , and I am definitely on board for the long haul!

I will admit to being a bit miffed that Dan didn't provide more background info on how the Nocturnals were created and why, kind of like a #0 issue, but other than that I'm having a splendid time. I'm very much looking forward to seeing where Dan is going with this.

Later,
David Peattie
Concord, CA

I'm sure, even after reading the last issue of this particular series, that you have questions, David. I sure hope you do anyway. It means I can hopefully try and capture your attention the next time around and maybe answer a few more questions for you. Believe me, I have every intention of delving into the backgrounds of the Nocturnals; I just don't want to give up everything at once, you know? I'm not a big fan of "origin" stories or starting off with the hero-to-be getting bit by a radio-active grasshopper and going from there...I really wanted you to get the feeling that the Nocturnals had already been alive and causing trouble long before the readers ever saw the first issue. I, too, am anxious to see where The Nocturnals go from here, and where they've been.

Anyone interested in original art should contact Mitch Itkowitz at Graphic Collectibles for a groovy catalog at (914) 246-0952. Nocturnals art isn't currently available, and I have no idea when it will be, but most of the other stuff I've done that's for sale is acquirable through Mitch.

Again, thanks to all of you out there for supporting this book. I'll do my damndest to get the next Nocturnals project out there as quickly as my left hand can paint and my two pointer fingers can peck out a story. In the meantime, I encourage you to seek out different comics and publishers you don't regularly frequent, and find the real gems of this medium. There are so many.

Be on the lookout for more Nocturnals goodies in the near future, including a Gunwitch Resin Kit now in the works...
Until next time, Adios!

Staying up all night,

BRERETON

Dan Brereton